AMENDMENTS

IN THE CLAIMS:

Replace the indicated claims with:

- 1. (Previously Amended) A preparation process for a first aqueous dispersion comprising an *ex-situ* photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic carboxylic acid, comprising the steps of: separately preparing a second aqueous dispersion comprising said ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a third aqueous dispersion comprising said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic carboxylic acid; and mixing said second aqueous dispersion with said third aqueous dispersion to produce a mixture thereof, wherein said first aqueous dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-soluble metal or ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said second aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said third aqueous dispersion; increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion; and increasing the pH of said mixture to a value of at least 8.0.
- 2. (Previously Presented) Preparation process according to claim 1, wherein said third aqueous dispersion further comprises a first in situ photosensitive silver halide.
- 3. (Previously Presented) Preparation process according to claim 1, wherein said pH value of at least 8.0 is attained by addition of ammonia.
- 4. (Previously Presented) Preparation process according to claim 1, wherein said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic carboxylic acid is a silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid greater than 12 carbon atoms.

- 5. (Currently Amended) A first aqueous dispersion comprising an ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms obtained by a preparation process according to claim [[1]] 4.
- 6. (Currently Amended) First aqueous dispersion according to claim 5, wherein said first aqueous dispersion further contains a reducing agent for said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms.
- 7. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a layer of a photo-addressable thermally developable element of a photothermographic recording material, said photo-addressable thermally developable element comprising photosensitive silver halide, said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms, a reducing agent therefor in thermal working relationship therewith and a binder, comprising the steps of: (i) preparing a first aqueous dispersion according to claim [[1]] 4; and (ii) coating said first aqueous dispersion on a support.
- 8. (Currently Amended) A preparation process for a fourth aqueous dispersion comprising a second *in-situ* photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms, comprising the steps of: (i) providing said third aqueous dispersion of claim 1 and (ii) partially converting said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms in said third aqueous dispersion with a non-fluoro halide ion source into said second in-situ photosensitive silver halide thereby producing said fourth aqueous dispersion; wherein said fourth aqueous dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-soluble metal or ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to step (ii); increasing the pH of the

third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 during step (ii); and increasing the pH of said aqueous dispersion resulting from step (ii) to a value of at least 8.0.

9. (Previously Presented) Preparation process according to claim 8, wherein said pH value of at least 8.0 is attained by addition of ammonia.

10. (Cancelled)

- 11. (Currently Amended) A fourth aqueous dispersion comprising a second in-situ photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms obtained by a preparation process according to claim 8.
- 12. (Currently Amended) Fourth aqueous dispersion according to claim 11, wherein said fourth aqueous dispersion further contains a reducing agent for said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms.
- 13. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a layer of a photo-addressable thermally developable element of a photothermographic recording material, said photo-addressable thermally developable element comprising photosensitive silver halide, said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organie aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms, a reducing agent therefor in thermal working relationship therewith and a binder, comprising the steps of: (i) preparing a fourth aqueous dispersion according to claim 11; and (ii) coating said fourth aqueous dispersion on a support.
- 14. (Currently Amended) A photothermographic recording material comprising a photo-addressable thermally developable element, wherein the photo-addressable thermally developable element comprises a layer produced with a first dispersion, wherein the first aqueous dispersion comprises an ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon

atoms, and wherein the first aqueous dispersion is obtained by a preparation process for a first aqueous dispersion comprising the steps of: separately preparing a second aqueous dispersion comprising said ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a third aqueous dispersion comprising said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organie aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms; and mixing said second aqueous dispersion with said third aqueous dispersion to produce a mixture thereof, wherein said first aqueous dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-soluble metal or ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said second aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said third aqueous dispersion; increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said second aqueous dispersion; and increasing the pH of said mixture to a value of at least 8.0.

15. (Currently Amended) A photothermographic recording material comprising a photo-addressable thermally developable element, wherein the photo-addressable thermally developable element comprises a layer produced with a fourth aqueous dispersion, wherein said fourth aqueous dispersion comprises a second in-situ photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and wherein the fourth aqueous dispersion is obtained by a preparation process comprising the steps of: (i) providing said third aqueous dispersion of claim 1 and (ii) partially converting said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms in said third aqueous dispersion with a non-fluoro halide ion source into said second in-situ photosensitive silver halide thereby producing said fourth aqueous dispersion; wherein said fourth aqueous dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-soluble metal or ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to step (ii); increasing the pH of the third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 during step (ii); and increasing the pH of said aqueous dispersion resulting from step (ii) to a value of at least 8.0, wherein said process further includes a step

of adding a water-soluble silver salt having a solubility in water at 20°C of greater than 0.1 g/L at any stage in said preparation process.

- 16. (Currently Amended) A photothermographic recording material comprising a photo-addressable thermally developable element, wherein the photo-addressable thermally developable element comprises a layer produced with a first aqueous dispersion, wherein the first aqueous dispersion comprises an ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organie aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms, and wherein the first aqueous dispersion is obtained by a preparation process for a first aqueous dispersion comprising the steps of: separately preparing a second aqueous dispersion comprising said ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a third aqueous dispersion comprising said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms; and mixing said second aqueous dispersion with said third aqueous dispersion to produce a mixture thereof, wherein said first aqueous dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-soluble metal or ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said second aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said third aqueous dispersion; increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said second aqueous dispersion; and increasing the pH of said mixture to a value of at least 8.0, wherein said process further includes a step of adding a water-soluble silver salt having a solubility in water at 20°C of greater than 0.1 g/L at any stage in said preparation process.
- 17. (Previously Presented) Preparation process according to claim 1, wherein said process further includes a step of adding a water-soluble silver salt having a solubility in water at 20°C of greater than 0.1 g/L at any stage in said preparation process.
- 18. (Previously Presented) Preparation process according to claim 8, wherein said process further includes a step of adding a water-soluble silver salt having a solubility in water at 20°C of greater than 0.1 g/L at any stage in said preparation process.